

Minutes from June 4, 1998
Agricultural Ground Water Quality Coordination Committee

Gary Bahr opened the meeting at 9:10 am. Following the Agenda, there were introductions. In attendance were public and private sector representatives.

Listing of attendees:

Mike Rupert, USGS

From **9:10 to 9:40**, Gary Bahr (Chair of the Committee) provided an overview of the *Agricultural Ground Water Coordination Committee* which was formed in 1995 as a part of the *Agricultural Ground Water Protection Plan*. Gary discussed the need to continue the committee process. The committee is going to restart the process of meeting quarterly. The next meeting is tentatively set for Thursday, September 10, 1998 at ISDA's main conference room. A mailing containing a meeting notice and agenda will be sent out 30 days prior to the meeting.

The group also discussed the committee membership. Within the *Agricultural Ground Water Protection Plan* there is a list of the members of the committee.

On Page 77 of the plan, there is a description of the committee membership.

"The Idaho Department of Agriculture will be responsible for the administration and coordination of the Agricultural Ground Water Quality Committee. The committee will be composed of one representative from the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD), and appropriate state and federal agencies including, IDWH-DEQ, ISDA, IDW, SCC, CES, EPA, and NRCS. Additionally, this group will include a representative from each of the following: an environmental group, agricultural chemical industry, agricultural producers, and an education and research group. The membership of the Agricultural Ground Water Quality Coordination Committee may be adjusted to include additional federal and state agencies, water user groups, local government representatives, or other stakeholders approved by a majority vote of either the Ground Water Council, or its successor."

"This committee will solicit comments from the general public and will provide opportunities for local participation and review. This committee will also coordinate the activities of the various work groups and committees relative to agricultural ground water programs"

The current members is as follows:

Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD): Kent Foster, Lance Holloway
IDWH-DEQ: Donna West, Scott Short, Dean Yashan, Joe Baldwin, Regional Office
staff will receive minutes and attend as needed.

ISDA: Gary Bahr (Committee Chair), Jon Gould, Kirk Campbell, Marv Patten, Mike Mitchell, Jenni Beddose, Jennifer Ambrose
 IDWR: Paul Castelin, Mark Slifca, Ken Neely, Janet Crockett, John Mitchell,
 SCC: Jerry Nicolescu, Tony Bennett, Biff Burliegh, SCC district staff as needed
 CES: Dr. Bob Mahler, Ronda Hirnyck, other extension and faculty as needed
 EPA: Gary McRae, Garrett Wright, and others as needed
 NRCS: Jim Wood, Lee Brooks, and DCs as needed

Environmental

group: Ned Bowler, Idaho Snake River Alliance
 Scott Brown, Idaho Conservation League
 Ned was a Ground Water Council member and has participated in the agricultural ground water committee from the beginning. Gary Bahr encouraged Ned and Scott Brown from the ICL to coordinate on who represented the environmental perspective in the future.

Agricultural

Chemical

Industry: Rich Garber, or Rex Schorzman, Idaho Crop Production Association

Agricultural

Producers: Dr. Greg Nelson, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Education &

Research

Group: Dr. Roy Mink, Idaho Water Resources Research Institute (IWRRI)

The membership of the Agricultural Ground Water Quality Coordination Committee may include:

Additional federal agencies: Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service
 Additional State agencies: Idaho Dept. of Parks and Recreation
 Water user groups: Idaho Water Users Association (Lynn Tominaga), Specific Irrigation Districts as needed
 Local government
 Representatives: Idaho Association of Cities, Idaho Association of Counties, As needed, Specific cities representatives, Specific city or county planning and zoning representatives.
 Other stakeholders: unspecified

The Ag Ground Water Coordination Committee agreed that the new members could be included. Gary will send out information to the new committee members.

Presentations

From 9:10 to 9:40 am, Gary Bahr (ISDA)

Gary went over the *Agricultural Ground Water Protection Plan* with the group. The key elements of the plan are related to the Prevention and Response Strategies, the monitoring component, and the agencies and committees that will work to support the processes. Gary discussed with the group the need to restart the efforts of the education subcommittee, and the BMP technical and effectiveness committees. The group discussed the need to work on these tasks before creating a regulatory committee. However, with the IDHW-DEQ Ground Water Rule of 1997 in effect the Ag Coordination Committee will need to address the regulatory aspects at the next meeting.

From 9:40 to 10:00 am, Dean Yashan (DEQ)

Dean provided an excellent overview of the Ground Water Monitoring Technical Committee work that has been occurring since August of 1996. The Ground Water Monitoring Technical Committee was created due to language within the *Agricultural Ground Water Protection Plan*. Dean Yashan (DEQ) is the chair of the multi agency group. Dean's talk focused on the GIS techniques he has been utilizing to organize and display all the agency and private sector monitoring in Idaho. The work is providing a format for agencies to follow to understand where detection of concern are and to coordinate on further monitoring. He also went over the ranking system created for contaminants of concern.

From 10:00 to 10:45 am, Ken Neely and Janet Crockett, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR)

Ken and Janet provided a presentation on the Statewide Ambient Ground Water Monitoring Program. Their presentation provided an overview of the whole program and also a focused look at the Twin Falls Hydrogeologic Subarea. The data associated with the Twin Falls Subarea indicates elevated nitrate levels in ground water. The median value for nitrate is the highest in median value for all subareas in the entire state. There are also a number of pesticides detections, although those are very low in concentration. They can be contacted at 327-7900 for copies of their reports.

From 10:45 – 11:30 am, Mike Rupert, US Geological Survey (USGS)

Mike gave two presentations related to NAWQA work performed in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer system. His presentations were related to the isotope testing and ground water age dating project and the nitrogen source work that he performed. The conclusions indicate that certain aquifers in Minidoka, Jerome, and Gooding counties have been recharged with newer water, which is isotopically heavier than older historic ground water, and that some of these areas also coincide with nitrate impacts coming from nonpoint sources such as agriculture. From his nitrogen work, the three key

nitrogen sources within the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer are fertilization, manure, and urban. For more information call Mike at 387-1300.

From 11:30 am – 11:50 am, John Mitchell, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR)

John discussed the results related to the work he conducted within the A&B Irrigation District. Since 1980 the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) has sampled and tested the deep production wells, within the district, for nitrate-nitrogen. John has performed some mapping of the nitrate concentrations as well as: evaluated depth to ground water data, evaluated well logs, evaluated and tested water going down into injection wells, and evaluated ground water flow patterns within the A&B Irrigation District. His conclusions indicate that the injections are a minor contributor, and that leaching of nitrate from irrigated agriculture within the district is the major contributor. Gary Bahr stated that; without historical data on injection well injectate nitrate concentrations, his conclusions that the injections are not a major contributor may be false in terms of determining what the processes are that have lead to current nitrate trend. Rex Schorzman (ICPA, & Paul Chemical) stated that current agricultural practices may not be reflective of the current ground water problem, and that years of drought and sprinkler conversion could be leading to less of a dilution factor of existing nitrate in the ground water. John has a report in draft. The committee recommended that a letter go out to the IDWR director asking that report be printed and made public.

From 11:50 am – 12:00 am, Gary Bahr, Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

Gary Bahr gave a brief overview of the regional and local ground water monitoring that ISDA is conducting for agrichemicals. Gary provided a handout and gave an a brief statement of findings in the areas of Washington, Payette, Minidoka, Jerome, Gooding, and Shoshone Counties. ISDA is conducting monitoring for pesticides and nutrients in Payette, Gem, Twin Falls, Fremont, Madison, Jefferson, Bonneville, Bingham, Bannock, and Kootenai counties.

From 12:00 – 1:10 pm, Lunch was served. The committee also viewed a video of the water quality protection effort on the Shoshone-Bannock Indian Reservation.

From 1:10 pm – 1:30 pm, Mike Etcheverry, Idaho Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Mike gave a presentation on the regional monitoring associated with the USDA Burley Demonstration project in Minidoka and Cassia counties. Mike and DEQ have been tracking the concentration of nitrate in shallow ground water, mostly sampling from sand points.

From 1:30 pm – 2:10 pm, Joe Baldwin and Mike Cook, Idaho Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Mike Cook presented information related to the NPDES Land Application program that DEQ administers. Mike gave an overview of the regulatory requirements and the decision making processes. Mike used a few examples related to certain sites.

From **2:10 – 2:40 pm**, Dr. Bob Mahler, University of Idaho, CES

Bob gave a presentation on his work related to a statistically based survey that he conducted to obtain the opinions of Idahoan's, on water quality protection, in rural and urban settings. The results revealed that the majority of Idahoan's have a good knowledge of where the pollutants come from, and that they believe that Idaho's water is in good condition but degrading. The survey also revealed that the citizens want ground and surface water protected. For more information call Bob at 208-885-7025.

From **2:40 – 3:00 pm**, Lance Holloway, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD)

Lance provided an overview of the Idaho Home & Farm*A*Syst project which is designed to assist landowners and well owners in assessing their risks to water quality and identifying how fix the problems. Lance is working with various groups to implement programs including: EPA Region X, DEQ, ISDA, and IDWR.

From **3:00 – 3:30 pm**, Gary Bahr, ISDA

Gary provided the wrap-up. The committee discussed the following action items:

- The next meeting will be in September 10, 1998 from 9 am to 3:30 pm at the Idaho State Dept. of Agriculture.
- New committee members will be invited. Gary Bahr will send out the information to these groups.

Additional federal agencies: Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service

Additional State agencies: Idaho Dept. of Parks and Recreation

Water user groups: Idaho Water Users Association (Lynn Tominaga), Specific Irrigation Districts as needed

Local government

Representatives: Idaho Association of Cities, Idaho Association of Counties, As needed, Specific cities representatives, Specific city or county planning and zoning representatives.

Other stakeholders: unspecified

- Gary stated that the various subcommittees would be discussing activities prior to the September meeting. Before the next meeting, Gary will discuss the role of these subcommittees with the other agencies. The regulatory committee would be a discussion item for the next committee meeting.

- A small group of people need to form a technical group to look at the BOR data associated with the A&B irrigation district. Mike Rupert, Gary Bahr, and John Mitchell where to work on this.
- Gary was to write a letter to the IDWR director to request that John Mitchell's report on the A&B site be released.
- Gary asked Dr. Mahler if his survey results could be put into a brochure or CES publication.